

course. There will be times when people tell you a different way is more accepted or popular. Remember that popularity is as fleeting as the Texas wind. Character and conscience are as sturdy as the oaks on this campus. If you go home at night, look in the mirror, and be satisfied that you have done what is right, you will pass the only test that matters.

And finally, be on the lookout for role models, people whose conduct you admire and whose path you can follow. With that in mind, I have one last example of courage and service. It's a story of a young man who left comfort behind to answer his Nation's call, became the youngest pilot in the Navy, and nearly gave his life in World War II. When he came back home, he devoted his career to public service and proved that success in politics can be accomplished with decency and grace. He reached the pinnacle in Government, but he defines his life by other roles: a father who gave unconditional love; a grandfather devoted to his grandchildren; and a beloved husband of the sweetheart he married a lifetime ago. Some of you will leave A&M with a degree that carries this good man's name, George Bush. I have been blessed and honored to have carried it for 62 years.

I want to thank you. I want to thank you for the opportunity to share this special day with you. I congratulate you. When I leave office next month, I will depart confident in the future of our country, because I have faith in each of you. I will depart uplifted by the many acts of courage and service that I have witnessed these past 8 years. I will depart grateful for the outpouring of support and prayers that have strengthened Laura and me. And I will depart ready to come home to the people I have missed and the place I love, the State of Texas.

And so, after all this, there is only one thing left to say: Gig'em Aggies! Congratulations, and may God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:36 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to former President George H.W. Bush, who introduced the President; and Christine Krissoff, wife of Lt. Comdr. Bill Krissoff, USN. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Executive Order 13482—Closing of Executive Departments and Agencies of the Federal Government on Friday, December 26, 2008

December 12, 2008

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. All executive branch departments and agencies of the Federal Government shall be closed and their employees excused from duty on Friday, December 26, 2008, the day after Christmas Day, except as provided in section 2 of this order.

Sec. 2. The heads of executive branch departments and agencies may determine that certain offices and installations of their organizations, or parts thereof, must remain open and that certain employees must report for duty on December 26, 2008, for reasons of national security or defense or other public need.

Sec. 3. Friday, December 26, 2008, shall be considered as falling within the scope of Executive Order 11582 of February 11, 1971, and of 5 U.S.C. 5546 and 6103(b) and other similar statutes insofar as they relate to the pay and leave of employees of the United States.

Sec. 4. This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, by any party against the United States, its agencies, instrumentalities, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 12, 2008.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:15 a.m., December 15, 2008]

NOTE: This Executive order will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 16.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

December 6

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Philadelphia, PA, where, at the Union League of Philadelphia headquarters, he received the Union League of Philadelphia's Gold Medal Award. He then traveled to Lincoln Financial Field, where he visited the U.S. Naval Academy and U.S. Military Academy football teams' locker rooms prior to the Army-Navy football game.

In the afternoon, the President participated in the Army-Navy football game coin toss and then watched the game. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

December 7

In the afternoon, in the East Room, the President and Mrs. Bush hosted a reception for Kennedy Center honorees.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush attended the Kennedy Center Honors Gala at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

December 8

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to McLean, VA, where he visited the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the National Counterterrorism Center and participated in briefings.

In the afternoon, the President met and had lunch with National Counterterrorism Center staff. He then returned to Washington, DC. Later, in the Library, he participated in an interview with Cynthia McFadden of ABC News.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Elias Antonio Saca Gonzalez of El Salvador to the White House on December 16.

December 9

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to West

Point, NY, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Sgt. Jermaine Malone, USA.

In the afternoon, at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, the President met with West Point senior cadets. He then participated in an interview with the Pentagon Channel.

Later in the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC, where, upon arrival on the South Lawn, he met with Lance Cpl. Patrick P. Pittman, Jr., USMC, and Lance Cpl. Marc E. Olson, USMC, who were both wounded in a suicide bomb attack in Ramadi, Iraq. He also met with Lance Cpl. Pittman's father, Patrick P. Pittman, Sr., and Lance Cpl. Olson's mother, Janice Kloski.

December 10

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he participated in an interview with Tom Bevan and John McIntyre of RealClearPolitics. He then participated in an interview with Liz Clarke of the Washington Post.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a presentation ceremony for recipients of the Presidential Citizens Medal. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he participated in a video teleconference with democracy advocate bloggers from Belarus, China, Cuba, Egypt, Iran, and Venezuela.

The President announced his intention to nominate Matthew W. Friedrich to be Assistant Attorney General (Criminal Division).

December 11

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Secretary of the Treasury Henry M. Paulson, Jr., to discuss bailout legislation for the automobile industry.

In the evening, the President was briefed on Congress's failure to pass bailout legislation for the automobile industry.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation: Richard D. Fairbanks; Arthur G. Linkletter; Sonya E. Medina; Stephen Odland; and Jose R. Ramos.